

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
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July 2, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Human Rights in Argentina

Your memorandum to the Secretary of June 27 informed the Department of the President's wishes to acknowledge human rights actions taken by the Argentine government on June 14. These actions were the basis for acknowledgements by both the Secretary at Grenada and by our Director to the World Bank:

-- In his conversation with Foreign Minister Montes at Grenada on June 16, the Secretary informed his counterpart that we would be abstaining on two Argentine loans in the World Bank but made reference to recent progress.

-- The same day in the World Bank, our Director stated that there have been a number of recent indicators which suggest that the situation may be changing for the better in Argentina. The Director continued that it was the United States strong hope that further improvement in the human rights situation will make it possible for us to support future loans to Argentina. Privately, our Director made it clear to his Argentine colleague that the indicators we were talking about were the June 14 actions.

With respect to the improvements noted in your memorandum, our Embassy in Buenos Aires commented upon them in its B.A. 04638 of June 22.

-- The Embassy stated that the release of 342 persons from executive custody over two weeks represents a considerably larger number of people than usual.

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However, the Embassy noted that we do not know how many people actually regained liberty and how many were turned over to the courts.

-- The processing of almost 1,000 cases of subversion by the federal and military courts is difficult to assess. The Argentine government has not released the names of those tried, the nature of the charges, or information on the sentences.

-- President Videla's reported instructions to his officials to analyze the reinstatement of the suspended right of option recalls earlier reviews of this subject. The last review resulted in an extension until September. The Embassy feels it is unclear whether more favorable action may be expected after September.

Based on continuing information on abuses emanating from all elements of our Mission in Argentina, the Department believes that the June 14 steps should be viewed cautiously. They may possibly be nothing more than a statistical smoke screen designed to mask a continued repressive policy.

The attached cable, in accordance with the President's wishes, expresses United States interest in recent Argentine steps and elicits further information. We would appreciate your clearance.

Frank J. Tarnoff
Peter Tarnoff
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

- Cable to Amembassy, Buenos Aires
- BA 04638 of June 22

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Clearances: ARA/ECA:RWZimmermann (draft)/*ff*
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